Discrimination against Civilian Officers

1382. CHAUDHARY CHUNNI LAL : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in MES a civilian officer in the scale of Rs. 22,400—26,400 is designated as Addl. Director General and Army Officer in the scale of Rs. 18,400—22,400 as Director General;

(b) if so, the reason for such discrimination against civilian officers; and

(c) action being taken to reverse the role of two officers as recommended by Fifth Central Pay Commission?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The matter is under examination in Ministry of Defence.

Sainik Schools in Himachal Pradesh

1383. SHRI ANIL SHARMA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of sainik schools functioning in Himachal Pradesh, district-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to increase the number of sainik schools in Himachal Pradesh in order to encourage prosperity of soldiers due to large number of army personnel from the State;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?;

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) One at Sujanpur Tira in Hamirpur District.

(b) to (d) Under the present scheme, the respective State Government has to give an undertaking to meet the entire cost of setting up the infrastructure, maintenance and to bear an element of

recurring expenditure in running of the Sainik schools. No such proposal has been received from the Government of Himachal Pradesh.

Status of LCA Project

1384. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the present status of LCA project; and

(b) by when it is likely to be inducted in Air Force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) (i) The first LCA aircraft, called 'Technology Demonstrator—1' (TD-1), is in the final stages of ground testing and evaluation. This would be followed by the first flight which is likely to occur in the first half of this year.

(ii) The second aircraft, TD-2 is undergoing integration tests. Work on prototype vehicles (PV-1 to PV-5) has commenced and PV-1 is in the stage of structural assembly.

(b) On successful completion of the planned flight trials, LCA would enter the production and induction phase. According to current indications, the planned target for entry into operational service is likely to be in the period 2004-2005.